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Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 ACDA-12 ARA-10
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 EB-08
AGRE-00 AID-05 OMB-01 /130 W
----------003639 271338Z /40
R 270832Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6915
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T KHARTOUM 1343

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PINT, SU, ET, ME, SO, PEPR, XF
SUBJ: NIMEIRI'S VIEWS ON AREA DEVELOPMENTS

1. I TOOK SOME AMERICAN VISITORS TO CALL ON PRESIDENT NIMEIRI ON MARCH 25. CONVERSATION LASTED NINETY MINUTES AND COVERED A WIDE RANGE OF TOPICS.
2. ERITREA. NIMEIRI SAID HE DID NOT THINK ETHIOPIANS/SOVIETS/CUBANS WOULS UNDERTAKE LARGE SCALE RECONQUEST OPERATIONS IN ERITREA UNTIL AFTER OAU SUMMIT IN JULY. HE FELT THAT ETHIOPIA WOULD NOT WISH TO BE FIGHTING MAJOR CIVIL WAR AT TIME OF SUMMIT. RAINS IN ERITREA WOULD THEN PREVENT AIR SUPPORT OPERATIONS UNTIL LATE OCTOBER. NIMEIRI'S GUESS WAS THAT MAJOR CAMPAIGN WOULD BEGIN IN NOVEMBER. MEANWHILE HE EXPECTED LIMITED OPERATIONS TO RELIEVE THE SIEGES OF ASMARA AND MASSAWA AND TO OPEN UP ROAD COMMUNICATIONS.
3. ETHIOPIA. NIMEIRI SAID ETHIOPIANS HAD STILL NOT SET
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A DATE FOR VISIT TO ADDIS BY FIRST VP ABUL QASSIM. HE SAID ETHIOPIAN MOFA PERMANENT UNDERSECRETARY HAD VISITED KHARTOUM AND "TALKED A LOT OF NONSENSE" BUT NOTHING HAD COME OF IT. NIMEIRI IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY CONVINCED THAT SOVIETS ARE INTERPOSING A VETO ON ETHIOPIAN WISHES TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH SUDAN.
4. LIBYA. NIMEIRI SAID SEVERAL TIMES THAT QADDAFI WAS

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"INPREDICTABLE". HIS SOLE OBJECT IN TRYING TO IMPROVE
RELATIONS WITH QADDAFI WAS TO FACILITATE THE RETURN OF THE
3,000 (SIC) ARMED ANSAR PRESENTLY IN LIBYAN TRAINING CAMPS.
SADIQ AL-MAHDI WAS CONTINUING TO COOPERATE WITH
NIMEIRI TO THIS END. NIMEIRI SAID HE WAS NO LONGER SO
CONCERNED ABOUT THREAT ANSAR POSED TO SUDAN. WHAT
BOTHERED HIM WAS THAT QADDAFI MIGHT USE ANSAR FOR
TERRORISM OR GUERRILLA WARFARE SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.
5. SUDANESE ECONOMY. NIMEIRI SAID A MILLION DOLLARS
IN FOREIGN OBLIGATIONS HAD COME DUE ON THAT VERY DAY
ANS HE WAS UNABLE TO PAY THEM. MEANWHILE HE HAD $50 MILLION
WORTH OF PEANUTS READY FOR EXPORT SITUATED IN WESTERN SUDAN.
PROBLEM LAY IN GETTING PEANUTS TO PORT SUDAN. SIXTY OF
SUDAN'S 150 LOCOMOTIVES WERE DEADLINED FOR LACK OF SPARE
PARTS. HE HAD NO FOREIGN EXCHANGE TO PURCHASE NECESSARY
SPARES. HE SAID SAUDIS, KUWAITIS, AND EMIRATES HAD BEEN
GENEROUS WITH PROJECT ASSISTANCE BUT THIS DID NOT HELP HIS
BALANCE OF PAYMENTS SITUATION.
6. SOMALIA. NIMEIRI SAID HE HAD RECEIVED NEW SOMALI
AMBASSADOR THAT MORNING WHEN LATTER HAD PRESENTED HIS
CREDENTIALS. HE HAD TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT HE WISHED TO
REPEAT HIS PREVIOUS ADVICE TO SIAD BARRE, I.E. SIAD SHOULD
REMOVE FROM HIS GOVERNMENT ALL KNOWN COMMUNIST SYMPATHIZERS
INCLUDING THOSE WHO MIGHT MAKE CONTACT WITH SOVIETS, SUBANS,
OR SOUTH YEMENIS. AN AMERICAN PRESENT SAID THERE WAS
A REPORT THAT SIAD WAS IN CONTACT WITH SOVIETS. THIS
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CLEARLY DISTRESSED NIMEIRI.
7. MIDDLE EAST. NIMEIRI SAID HE HOPED ARAB SUMMIT COULD
TAKE PLACE IN KHARTOUM AT AN EARLY DATE. IT WAS ESSENTIAL
THAT ARABS UNITE BEHIND SADAT. NIMEIRI SCOFFED AT
SELF-STYLED " CONFRONTATION" STATES. THEY SCREAMED
INCESSANTLY FOR WAR WITH ISRAEL. YET LAST WEEK, ISRAELIS
HAD ROAMED AT WILL ALL OVER SOUTH LEBANON. NONE OF THE
"CONFRONTATION" STATES HAD LIFTED A FINGER.
BERGUS

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